



San Diego City Attorney **CASEY GWINN**

MEDIA RELEASE

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE JUSTICE CENTER PROPOSAL UNVEILED THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN THE COUNTRY *PARTNERSHIP CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCED BY CITY ATTORNEY*

San Diego--San Diego City Attorney Casey Gwinn unveiled a revolutionary proposal to create the Domestic Violence Justice Center to comprehensively address domestic violence cases and to better assist victims and their children.. The one of a kind Center is supported by San Diego Police Chief David Bejarano and was presented at the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee at the request of Councilmember Toni Atkins, Chair of PS&NS. The Center would centralize under one roof the San Diego City Attorney and San Diego Police Department Domestic Violence Units and would include prosecutors, detectives, forensic medical personnel, social workers, probation and parole officers, advocates and other key agencies to meet the needs of victims and their children. It is a radically different approach from traditional criminal justice strategies.

"This Center will be like no other. It is community problem solving at its best" said City Attorney Gwinn. "First, it would be the only Center of its kind that will include the entire prosecution team. It will

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represent the best practices and models of child advocacy programs, sexual assault and domestic violence response teams in the nation that will be custom fit to San Diego's needs and strengths. The priority will be to put domestic violence victims and their children first and bring San Diego's resources to the victim as opposed to the victim having to seek help throughout the City and County."

Some of the other unique Center features that are envisioned include: full legal services, forensic exams, kids in court program, access to social services such as housing, mental health, child protective services, adult protective services, homeless team, counseling, military liaisons, and crisis workers.

City Attorney Gwinn and Assistant Police Chief Rulette Armstead outlined the plan in two phases. A temporary Center location has already been identified: 707 Broadway Street in downtown San Diego. This facility can accommodate 100 domestic violence professionals-- 68 professionals who work in the Domestic Violence Units of the City Attorney and Police Department, as well as numerous other key agencies. The second phase of the multi-million dollar project involves securing a permanent downtown location and expanding the services to include child abuse, elder abuse and sexual assault cases.

The Center was first conceptualized by City Attorney Gwinn in 1989, and seriously pursued by Chief Bejarano and his staff in 1999. After a two-year feasibility study and full community support, the City Attorney and Police Chief are committed to take the next step to make the Center a reality. The City Attorney intends to

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begin a massive fund-raising effort to seeking funds from private donors, the federal government, Foundations, City of San Diego, and others. The initial funding need is approximately \$1-million. The s

second phase, including building a specialized Center from the ground up, will cost approximately \$5-million.

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